

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-5 and 7-17 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider his rejections in view of the Amendments and Remarks as set forth below.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over of Sharp et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,263,317). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner states that the Sharp et al. reference discloses the functionality of the claimed invention. The Examiner states that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that the disclosure of Sharp et al. encompasses the claimed aspects. In particular, the Examiner states that Sharp et al. discloses a computer system and method to allow manufacturers and distributors of brand name products to participate in e-commerce without violating existing distribution channels. In particular, the Examiner points out that Sharp et al. shows a computer system 100, a customer using a client computer 120 which can access an e-commerce website hosted on a server computer 110 via computer network 150. The Examiner also points out that the website allows a customer to select among a large assortment of products.

Applicants submit that the Sharp et al. patent does not show all of the features of the present claimed invention. First, Applicants submit that the Examiner has not met his burden of showing a proper rejection. The Examiner has not indicated how the steps of the claimed invention correlate to the steps of the reference. The Examiner has discussed how the system of

Sharp et al. operates, but has not indicated how this corresponds to the particular steps of the claim. For example, the Examiner has not pointed out what corresponds to the transmitting of information through the collaboration server to a plurality of enterprise resource planning servers.

Furthermore, Applicants have now added the limitations previously found in claim 6 to each of claims 1 and 14. These limitations indicate that the enterprise resource planning (ERP) server includes four modules for specific purposes. These modules are not seen in the reference. Furthermore, Applicants submit that the modules and their functions would not be obvious over the Sharp et al. reference. The particular functions described in the claim for these modules is not specifically seen in Sharp et al. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is now allowable over this reference.

Claim 14 is another independent method claim which also describes a number of steps and particularly describes the available to promise technique. In addition, claim 14 describes the ERP server as including the four modules. Thus, Applicants submit that this claim is allowable for the same reasons cited above in regard to claim 1.

Claims 2-5, 7-13 and 15-17 depend from these allowable independent claims and, as such, are also considered to be allowable. In addition, each of these claims recite additional features of the invention. Accordingly, these claims are considered to be additionally allowable.

Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patent relied on by the Examiner. In view of this, reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of all of the claims are respectfully requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert F. Gnuse (Reg. No. 27,295) at the telephone number of (703) 205-8000, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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